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10 March 1959




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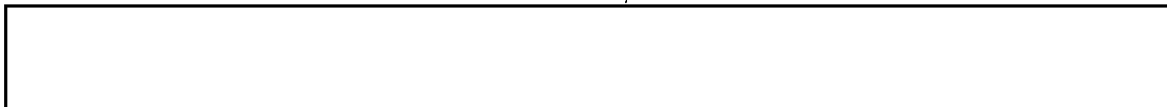
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no Kenya: The government's recent action against the leading African nationalist party may provoke the proviolence faction to start demonstrations which the moderate leader, Tom Mboya, might feel obliged to support. [REDACTED]

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ok Afghanistan-USSR: Afghan shipping costs to Europe through the USSR apparently will be about one half the costs of shipping by the traditional sea and overland routes through Pakistan. The new rates, which can be paid in Afghan currency, were established by an Afghan-Soviet agreement signed in January 1959. Although the USSR's bargain rates would undercut the US-financed Afghan-Pakistani transit program set up in June 1958, Afghanistan will probably continue to make considerable use of facilities through Pakistan in order to avoid dependence on the Soviet route. [REDACTED]

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DAILY BRIEF

ii

[REDACTED]
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III. THE WEST

ok
France: In the first round of municipal elections the Communist party seems to have recovered a considerable part of its losses in the November national elections--largely as a result of popular discontent with the government's austerity program. Runoffs next Sunday in municipalities under 120,000 are expected to reduce heavily the number of towns under Communist control, however, because the new electoral system encourages non-Communist parties to form alliances to exclude the Communists from office. [REDACTED]

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ok
Cyprus: A serious threat to the peaceful transition of Cyprus seems to have been eliminated by EOKA leader Grivas' farewell order to his followers on 8 March to lay down their arms and work for the new republic. Grivas and his close followers will be flown to Athens, under British amnesty, probably within two weeks. Bishop Kyprianos, an archrival of Makarios, remains unshaken in his demand for the political union of Cyprus and Greece. He has pledged himself, however, to work peacefully for the island's reconstruction. [REDACTED]

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DAILY BRIEF

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Nationalist-inspired Disorders May Develop in Kenya

Discontent in Kenya may soon break out in violent demonstrations as a result of a government move on 6 March against an alleged African campaign to undermine lawful authority. Thirty-four Africans associated with Tom Mboya's Nairobi People's Convention party were arrested, although only two were detained, including the leader of the party's proviolence wing, Elijah Omolo Agar. If Agar's supporters start demonstrations, Mboya may have to participate despite his reported aversion to violence.

For several weeks officials in Kenya have expected that Mboya may start a civil disobedience campaign if London does not meet African constitutional demands. Mboya wants greater legislative power and assurances that African rather than white settlers will ultimately control the government. Recently both the Africans and the European-settler minority have apparently hardened their attitudes.

[London has not yet agreed to "round-table" discussions on the Africans' terms, but a new policy statement for East Africa is to be issued soon, probably in April. In principle, Britain will propose the establishment of "parliamentary democracy" in Kenya with safeguards for minority interests. This principle and the governor's remark that some Europeans may leave Kenya suggest that the new policy will envisage an African political evolution which will be rapid in European eyes, but still short of African expectations. At the same time, major concessions to the Africans might provoke demonstrations on the part of settler hotheads.]

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USSR Offers Afghanistan Improved, Cheap Transit Facilities

In an apparent effort to offset the US-financed Afghan-Pakistani transit program set up in June 1958, Moscow has given Kabul guarantees of improved transit conditions through the USSR. Under the June agreement, Pakistan has given the Afghans improved facilities at Karachi port and is expediting the movement of Afghan goods through its territory. Reported details of the 8 January 1959 protocol to the Afghan-Soviet general transit agreement, however, indicate Afghan shipping costs to Europe through the USSR will be about half the costs of shipping by the traditional sea and overland routes through Pakistan.

The USSR apparently has agreed to accept payment for all transit charges in Afghan currency converted at more than three times its normal value. This will relieve the pressure on Afghanistan's holdings of foreign exchange. In addition, the USSR has recognized Afghan complaints about delays of goods crossing the Soviet Union and has given guarantees that Afghan imports and exports will transit Soviet territory in not more than 42 days.

The Afghans probably regard this development as further vindication of their policy of using assistance from one cold-war power to stimulate concessions from the other. Although they are likely to increase their use of the Soviet transit route, they will probably continue to make considerable use of facilities through Pakistan in order to avoid dependence on either.

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III. THE WEST

French Communists Regaining Electoral Strength

In the first round of municipal elections on 8 March, the French Communist party seems to have recovered about half the votes it lost in the November parliamentary elections, according to the US Embassy's analysis of still incomplete returns. Since the heaviest losses, compared with last November, were suffered by the Gaullists, it appears that the normally pro-Communist protest vote which had temporarily either jumped on the Gaullist bandwagon or abstained from a "useless" attempt to stem the tidal wave now is beginning to swing back to the Communists. Popular discontent with the government's austerity program is probably the most important factor in this shift. The Communist ticket's share of the popular vote, which formerly could be expected to reach about 25 percent, dropped to less than 19 percent in November.

In the large cities, where municipal councils are still chosen by proportional representation, the Communists made an even stronger showing but failed to obtain control. Final returns from Paris give them 29 seats out of 90 on the new municipal council, as opposed to 27 elected in 1953. In the twelve large cities over 120,000, the Communists polled a higher total vote than they did in either the November national elections or in the 1953 municipal contests.

In most of the approximately 1,400 smaller municipalities which now have Communist mayors, the party is expected to lose control in the runoff elections on 15 March. A new electoral law gives the list winning a plurality all the seats on the town council, and local combinations will probably be directed mainly against the Communists.

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Cyprus

EOKA leader George Grivas, whose prolonged silence had caused apprehension among British officials and embarrassment to Archbishop Makarios, finally announced his acceptance of the Cyprus settlement on 9 March. In a farewell order, Grivas, while admitting that the Cyprus agreements did not meet EOKA's aspirations, called on his followers to lay down their arms rather than precipitate "national disruption." He also asked all Greek Cypriots to unite around Makarios and assist him in creating an independent republic.

It is expected that Grivas will soon accept the amnesty terms offered him by the Cyprus Government and leave for Greece with several of his top aides. The Greek Government, which had much to lose in the forthcoming municipal election if Grivas had publicly denounced the Cyprus settlement, is expected to present the EOKA leader with new honors and a promotion to general in the Greek Army.

Grivas' call on Greek Cypriots to unite around Makarios will assist the latter in future controversies with extremes of both the right and left. Makarios' rival, Bishop Kyprianos of Kyrenia, upon return from exile on 8 March, called for a continuation of the struggle for "enosis"--union with Greece. Kyprianos indicated, however, that for the present he would cooperate in the reconstruction of Cyprus.

Cypriot Communists have not yet broken with Makarios, who appears desirous of maintaining this truce as long as he can. An eventual split appears inevitable, however, as the Cypriot Communists have joined the Greek Communists and the Soviet radio and press in denouncing the Cyprus settlement recently signed by the archbishop.

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